

**PROPOSED SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS OF
THE SPECIFIC NAME " FEROX " GMELIN (S.G.), 1771, AS PUB-
LISHED IN THE COMBINATION " ACCIPITER FEROX " (CLASS
AVES) (APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO SECURE A CLARIFICATION
OF " OPINION " 67)**

By **FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.,**

Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

(Commission Reference : Z.N.(S.) 1052)

The purpose of the present application is to ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to use its Plenary Powers to suppress the specific name *ferox* Gmelin (S.G.), 1771 (*Nov. Comment. Acad. imp. Sci. petrop.* 15 : 442), as published in the combination *Accipiter ferox*, in order to provide an assured position for the specific name *gallicus* Gmelin (J.F.), 1788 (*in* Linnaeus, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 13) 1(1) : 259), as published in the combination *Falco gallicus*, the specific name of the type species of *Circetus* Vieillot, 1816, a name which was placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* by the Ruling given by the International Commission in *Opinion* 67 (1916, *Smithson. Publ.* 2409 : 177—182).

2. This matter is one of considerable urgency, for arrangements are now well advanced for the early publication of the *Official Lists* in book-form and the present is one of a relatively small number of cases where further action by the Commission is required before publication can take place.

3. The present case arises out of a General Directive issued by the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948, which placed upon the International Commission the obligation (a) to enter on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* the specific name of the type species of every genus, the name of which had prior to that date been placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology*, where that name was the oldest available such name for the species concerned and, (b) in other cases to place on the *Official List* whatever might be found to be the oldest available name for the species in question.

4. Towards the close of 1955 steps were taken by the International Commission to comply with the foregoing Directive in so far as it applied to the names of the type species of genera of birds which had been placed on the

Official List before the Paris Congress of 1948². At this point Professor Ernst Mayr drew attention to the fact that the specific name *gallicus* Gmelin, 1788, would remain threatened until the name *ferox* Gmelin, 1771, as published in the combination *Accipiter ferox*, had been placed on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology*. In this connection he recalled that he had discussed this name in a paper which he had communicated to the Office of the International Commission some three weeks earlier. For the purposes of the present application the portion of Professor Mayr's paper relating to the name *Accipiter ferox* Gmelin has been extracted and is annexed hereto. It will be seen from Professor Mayr's paper that in the period from 1934—1944 various authors attempted to identify the foregoing nominal species with *Falco gallicus* Gmelin and consequently sank *gallicus* Gmelin as a junior subjective synonym of *ferox* Gmelin but that since 1944 the nominal species *Accipiter ferox* Gmelin had been universally accepted as indeterminable, the name *ferox* Gmelin being therefore treated as a *nomen dubium*.

5. In the paper referred to above Professor Mayr, who was not at that time aware that the name *ferox* Gmelin affected an existing entry on the *Official List*, proposed that the names enumerated in it should be dealt with under the notification and challenge procedure laid down by the Copenhagen Congress for the purpose of providing a means for securing immediate provisional protection for names, to be followed after a considerable period of years either by automatic permanent protection or by submission to the International Commission for the purpose of securing such protection. For the reasons explained in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, this slow-moving procedure is inappropriate in the present case, since the question is one which must be determined promptly in order to permit of the addition to the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* of the name *gallicus* Gmelin, 1788, before the *Official List* volume is sent to be printed.

6. Accordingly, I now ask the International Commission :—

- (1) in the light of the information provided by Professor Mayr, to use its Plenary Powers to suppress the specific name *ferox* Gmelin (S.G.), 1771, as published in the combination *Accipiter ferox*, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy ;
- (2) to place the specific name *gallicus* Gmelin (J.F.), 1788, as published in the combination *Falco gallicus* (specific name of type species of *Circaetus Vieillot*, 1816) on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* ;
- (3) to place on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* the specific name specified in (1) above, as there proposed to be suppressed under the Plenary Powers.

²The decisions taken by the International Commission in this matter have since been embodied in *Direction 43* (now in the press).

ANNEXE

Note on the specific name "*ferox*" Gmelin (S.G.), 1771, as published in the combination "*Accipiter ferox*"

(extract from a paper (Z.N.(S.) 1033) entitled "The Names of Nominal Species of Birds to be placed on the "Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology")

By **ERNEST MAYR**

(*Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*)

Accipiter ferox Gmelin

Accipiter ferox Gmelin (S.G.), 1771, *Novi. Comment. Acad. Petrop.* 15(1770) : 442, pl.X
"Astrachan"

This name has a chequered history. In the *Vögel pal. Fauna* (: 1115) Hartert uses it for the bird now called *Buteo rufinus* Cretzschmar. Hartert later realised that the name *ferox* was not applicable to this species (*op. cit.* : 1189) and it was discarded as unidentifiable. Claude Grant (1934, *Ibis* (13) 4 : 643) tried to show that the description of *Accipiter ferox* applied better to the Short-Toed Eagle (*Circus gallicus*) than to any other hawk and proposed to sink *gallicus* into the synonymy of *ferox*. This proposal was, for a while, accepted by several authors until Mayr showed (1944, *Emu* 43 : 302—304) that the original description of *Accipiter ferox* contains too many contradictions to be applied to the Short-Toed Eagle or any other hawk. This conclusion has since been adopted by Grant and all other recent authors and the name is now universally considered as indeterminate.

SUPPORT FOR DR. L. B. HOLTHUIS'S PROPOSALS RELATING TO
(a) THE SPECIFIC NAME "*DEPURATOR*", AS PUBLISHED IN THE
COMBINATION "*CANCER DEPURATOR*" AND (b) THE GENERIC
NAME "*MAJA*" LAMARCK, 1801 (CLASS CRUSTACEA, ORDER
DECAPODA)

By **ISOBEL GORDON**

(*British Museum (Natural History), London*)

Commission References : Z.N.(S.) 1031, Z.N.(S.) 1074

(For the proposals submitted see *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 12 : 99—105, 123—128)

(Letter dated 20th February 1956)

I am in agreement with Dr. Holthuis's proposal to validate *depurator*, [*holsatus*] and *latipes* (his *Portumnus* proposal) (Z.N.(S.) 1031); I am also in agreement with his proposal to validate *Maja* Lamarck, 1801 (Z.N.(S.) 1074).